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New Chief Promises More Efficient CIA

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WASHINGTON — Stansfield Turner celebrated the first anniversary of his becoming the nation's top "spook" last week by talking over some of his problems and successes with a small group of reporters.

Over orange juice, poached eggs and toast at breakfast, the Navy admiral serving as director of the Central Intelligence Agency cheerfully admitted he is taking his lumps from shrinking his overstaffed bureaucracy and cleansing the CIA image from past overzealousness in international "dirty tricks."

But he is happy in the belief that the CIA is "more efficient today than we were yesterday, and we'll be more efficient tomorrow than we are today."

In laying off more than 200 of his headquarters' staff and with about 600 still to be given the ax in the CIA's reorganization, the admiral said the retrenchment was absolutely necessary for the CIA to live to within its budget and to retire some of the so-called "senior vice presidents" in their fifties to make way for younger talent.

"MY JOB," he explained, "is not to make everyone happy but to have an efficient CIA. If after it has been reorganized and made more efficient and effective I also happen to be surrounded by happy people, all well and good. But it's not my primary job to make people happy."

The exposures of past CIA misdeeds have not helped CIA morale, the admiral acknowledges, but he feels the time has come "to stop flagellating ourselves about the past" and become positive about the future.

The nation, which wanted a change in the kind of CIA operations in the past that bungled the Bay of Pigs operation in Cuba, helped undermine the Allende government in Cuba and got the reputation for being in the foreign assassination business, has now got that change, the admiral insists.

It also has a new "co-ordinated intelligence community" made possible by President Carter's recent reorganization order giving CIA director Turner more direct control over all branches of national intelligence, but with strengthened safeguards against abuses.

THE ADMIRAL is surrounded by "watchdogs" in both the executive branch and Congress. In the former, he gets "advice and counsel" from an intelligence oversight board and direction from two arms of the National Security Council — the NSC review committee and its special coordination committee.

In Congress, he theoretically has to report on all major activities to eight committees, which he hopes will be reduced eventually to just two — the select intelligence committees of House and Senate.

Congress cannot stop the CIA from engaging in this and that covert operation, a power the CIA still has, but Turner admits it could effectively blow the whistle on some covert activity it doesn't like by making it public. He hopes that won't happen.

It is apparently not likely to happen in the Turner regime because the covert operations have been greatly reduced. But Turner, like his predecessors, feels strongly that in combatting with the "dirty tricks" the Soviet Union still likes to engage in, the U.S. must retain the capability of U.S. covert operations.

The CIA director has no illusions about the Soviet Union.

He revealed it has the capability to shoot down U.S. reconnaissance satellites. He told of how it is fishing in the troubled waters of black Africa, both in the Ethiopian-Somalia conflict and such areas as Angola, Mozambique and Tanzania.

AS TURNER SIZES it up, the Soviet Union is obsessed with a desire to outclass the United States economically, politically and militarily. In the first two categories it is

clearly frustrated by this nation's greater economic strength and political clout in most areas of the world.

So, he suggests, Russia tries to make up for its deficiencies in the economic and political field by throwing its military might into every situation it thinks might be profitable.

"There is very little we can do to inhibit the Soviet Union militarily," says the CIA director.

But a careful monitoring of such activities is absolutely essential to this nation's security. The admiral exudes confidence that his reorganized superspook agency can meet this challenge.